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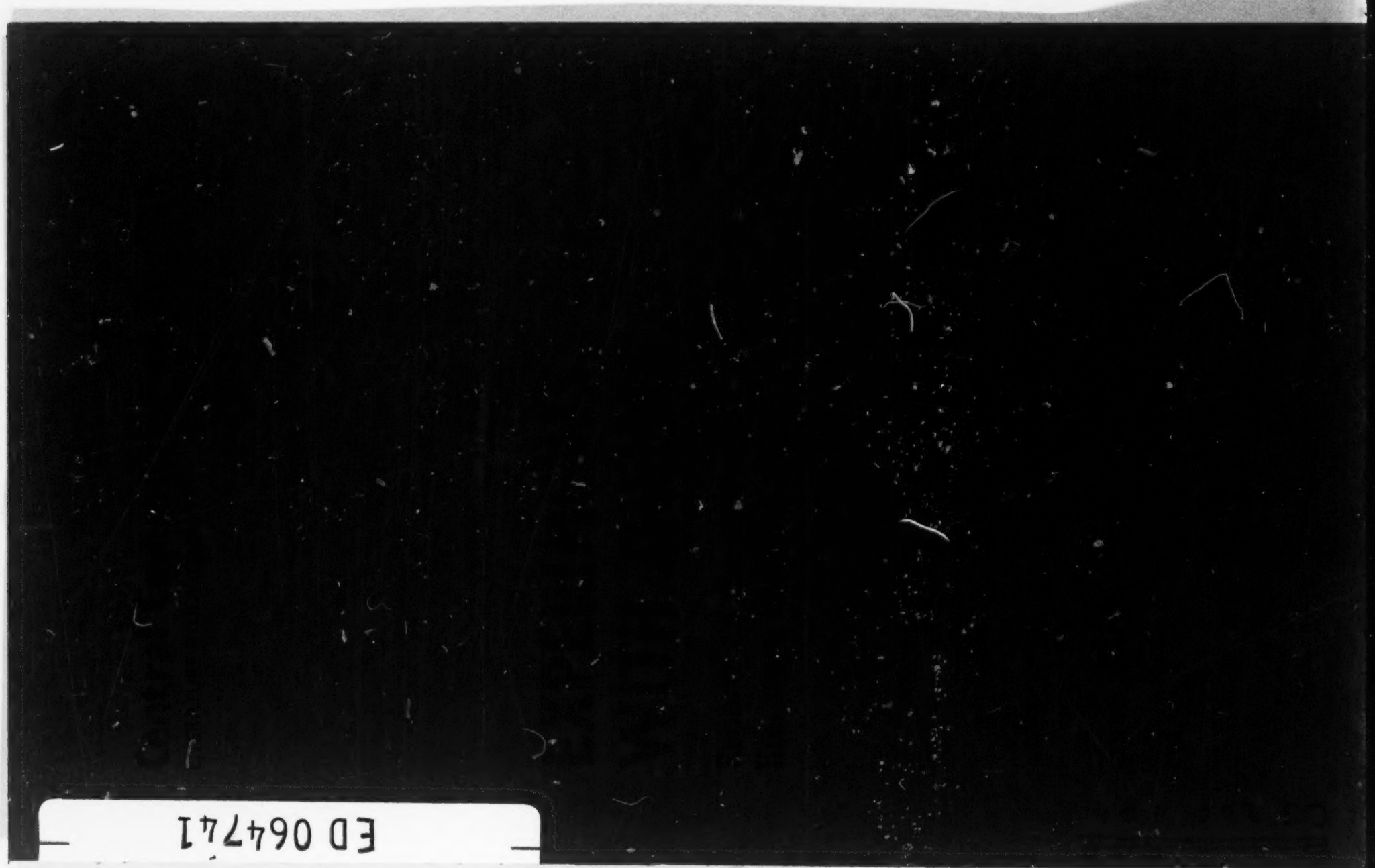
ABSTRACT

This is the second publication of the Literature Study Group using the thematic approach to literature for third through fifth year students in Scottish schools. Eight programs are presented which are a collection of literary texts grouped round a central theme. The programs are the work of different teachers who set out to discover in the classroom how successfully the thematic approach might be used in the later stages of the secondary schools. Presented are teacher's records of the experiment as well as frank discussions of the pitfalls and problems encountered and identified. The programs listed are: (1) The gap between aspirations and the reality of human behavior (Class V); (2) The Class System (Class V); (3) War--and its Aftermath (Class V); (4) Loyalty (Class IV); (5) Childhood (Class IV); (6) Work (Class IV); (7) Family Relationships (Class III); and (8) School Life (Class III). An appendix consists of samples taken from thematic programs produced by graduate students. Teachers using the thematic approach have found (a) discussion in the classroom becomes a very worthwhile activity and that (b) the quality of the writing both in the essays on the literature studied and in the more personal writings on the theme itself improves appreciably in content and style. (Author/LS)



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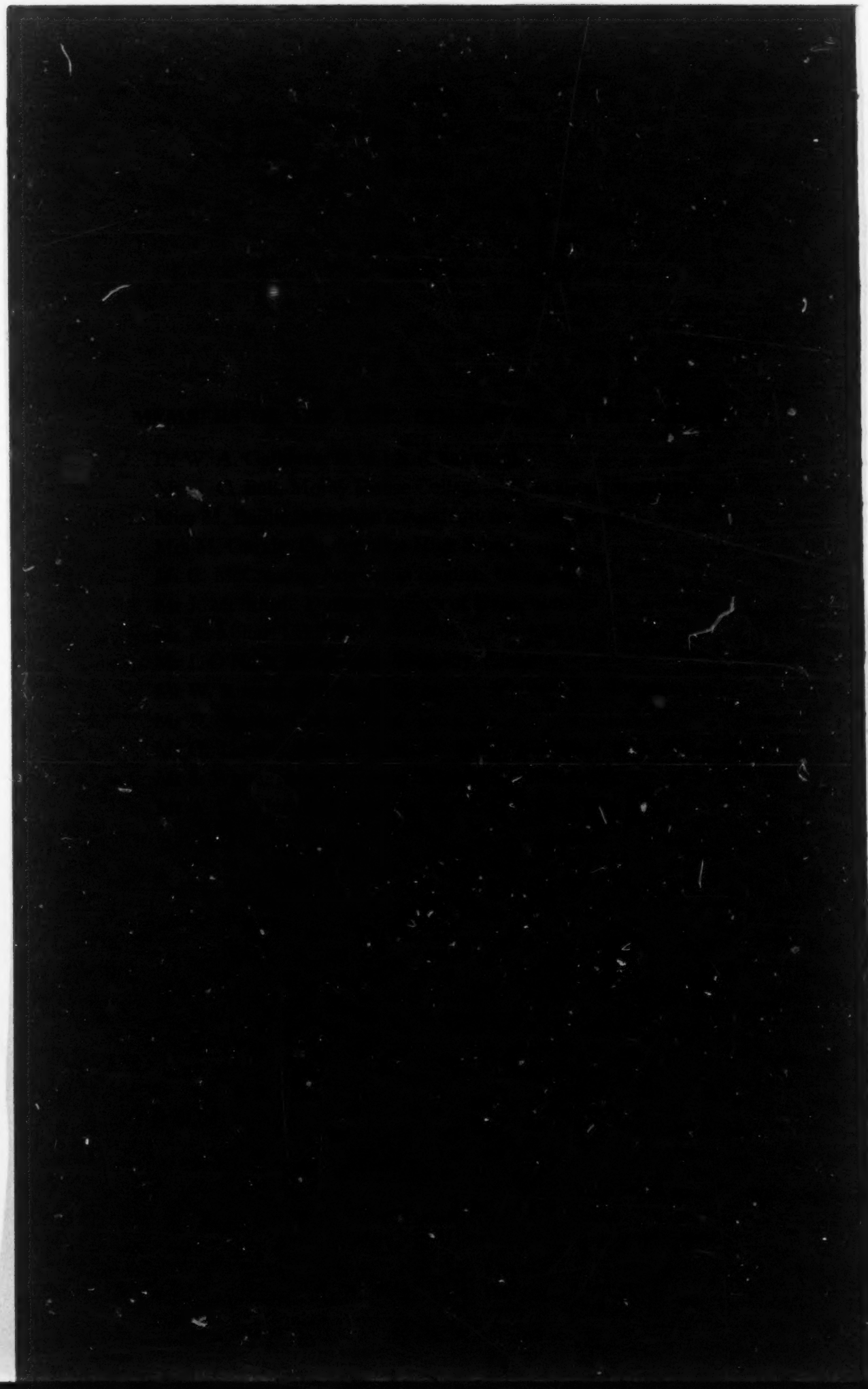

EXPERIMENTS WITH THEMES

Reports on the thematic approach to literature teaching.

Centre for Information on the Teaching of English,
Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh, 1971.

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FOREWORD

The Literature Study Group was set up by the Central Committee on English in 1968 to discuss the approaches advocated in Bulletin No. 2, *The Teaching of Literature,* to initiate further research, and if possible to produce more detailed guidance for teachers. In order to bring together various interests in the field of literature teaching, the membership comprised representatives from local development centres, some CCE members, a university teacher specialising in research and some College of Education lecturers. The Study Group has met only once per term since it was established, so that its work has essentially been the co-ordination of individual and local efforts rather than an intensive and unified project in research or development.

This is the second publication issued under the Group's aegis, the first being *The Plays We Teach,* an account of the Group's survey of plays studied by 3rd, 4th and 5th year classes in Scottish schools. The publication of these papers by the Centre for Information on the Teaching of English marks an important new development in the work of the CCE and the teachers who have so loyally supported it.

The Literature Study Group has from the beginning been associated with the Schools Council Project, *Children as Readers,* a project aimed at inspiring and co-ordinating the investigation of various aspects of literature teaching by local groups of teachers throughout England and Wales. It is hoped that the local development groups in Scotland will in future continue to associate themselves with their colleagues furth of Scotland, by exchanging papers and sharing their views and findings.

INTRODUCTION

The grouping of literary texts round some central theme has now become a widely accepted method of presenting literature to older children. Teachers who have experimented with this method are at one in claiming that it helps towards a more adequate motivation on the part of the pupils and thereby enhances the quality of the response they show to literature. The themes which interest today's adolescents are those which move adults also. Study and discussion of the literature which deals with man's inner nature, his environment and his relationships with other human beings, must help the growing boy and girl to be made aware of themselves as persons, and more capable of adapting to the real adult world with all its difficulties and prejudices. Themes can be suggested either by a piece of literature or by a consideration of one of the serious problems confronting contemporary society.

Once a theme has been established, however, it must be adequately supported by literary texts which are readily available in the English Department. Most of the teachers who have been using the themes presented in this booklet make the point that before such a method can be successfully used a great deal of pre-planning is necessary. The teacher must be able to anticipate, for instance, the kind of discussion which is likely to take place when the class embarks on the theme study: he should also prepare the kind of writing assignments which will fairly represent and encourage the natural development and exploration of the theme. In planning a theme-based programme in literature the teacher will soon find that he will be choosing one or two literary texts from his prepared list of reading which he will regard as being more basic to his purpose than the others. For him these texts will become core texts, i.e. those in which the proposed theme is a central issue. Close study of these texts followed by sincere open and spontaneous discussion should establish the conviction in the class that this theme is one that is central to the works concerned. Pupils cannot have this conviction, of course, until they have experienced as fully as they can each work of literature as a whole. Their recreation of the imaginative experience contained in a short poem will obviously be more immediate, despite complexity of language and structure, than the reliving of the world created in a novel or play. Whenever a novel or play is used as a core text, the teacher must ensure that at least one experience of the whole work is made available to the pupils. In the case of a play, this can be done by arranging for the class to hear a recording; in the case of a novel, the class should be expected to have read it at home. The teacher can then proceed to a scrutiny and discussion of key passages or scenes which present the basic theme of the whole work. The establishment of a theme in this fashion ensures that in the best sense of the word it is literature-based. By close study of the text, by questioning and discussion, by teaching about the significance of the work's structure and form, the work of art will be unfolded in all its fullness.

Once a theme study has gained its initial momentum the success of the writing assignments will depend to some extent on the nature of the discussion that has taken place when the core text was being studied. If the class become fully involved with the issues presented in and through the work of literature, then sincere, intelligent written responses can be expected. These may take the form of critical essays which have as their subjects the interpretation and form of the work of literature. They may take the form of more personalised writing, where the issues in the novel or play become a stimulus for the pupil to explore their relevance to his life and to the life of the community in which he lives.

This latter kind of writing can lead the pupil to explore modern expository prose in which the problems which confront society are continually being formulated and debated. Such an exploration may be undertaken through a study of essays by established authors or of articles in the best newspapers and magazines where basic questioning is constantly taking place about twentieth century man in his relationships with his fellow human beings. In this way the writing of senior pupils can be given more context and motivation.

The best writing, of course, will be achieved after the teacher has had time to deal with some of the other literature which has been selected to support and elucidate the theme of the core text. In general, most teachers who have genuinely experimented with the thematic approach to the teaching of literature have found that (a) discussion in the classroom becomes a very worthwhile activity and that (b) the quality of the writing both in the essays on the literature studied and in the more personal writings on the theme itself improves appreciably in content and style. Pupils—particularly in the 4th and 5th years—can reasonably be expected to produce more sustained writing when engaged in a theme-based programme of study than is possible when they are taught by more traditional methods. For this reason, when writing is being prescribed for the class it should take the form of personal assignments to which the pupils are committed and which should produce sustained continuous writing of various kinds: some of it creative or personal; some of it analytic and critical.

When the study of literature is being planned on a thematic basis, some care is essential at the planning stage to ensure that a proper balance is achieved among the different literary genres—particularly with senior pupils. Once this has been guaranteed, the thematic approach to literature can involve the pupils in the kind of close reading of texts which is the best preparation for practical criticism. Pupils will by this time have acquired most of the critical vocabulary necessary for the intelligent answering of questions on texts of different levels of complexity. They should also have read sufficiently widely to be able to deal adequately and sincerely with the questions on literature set in the Higher English paper. It may be relevant here to quote the following two sentences from Bulletin No. 2: "A thematic programme can also make the pupils familiar with and aware of the different forms of literature, deepening their perceptions of the significance of different structures. Thus it meets every normal requirement of good teaching: it catches and sustains the pupils' interests; it motivates them in critical read-

ing; it gives the pupils experience of different kinds of literature and can be so designed as to give them also a knowledge of the differences that can be perceived between writings of different periods and different authors; above all it contributes, perhaps more than any other method of teaching can do, to the personal development of the pupils."

Concurrently with the presentation of literature and its appreciation, the teacher may use the thematic method as a further means of integrating English studies. It has already been suggested that when the pupils' interest in the theme has been sharpened and deepened in discussion many topics associated with it will naturally be raised and that these topics—if the theme has been fundamental—will prompt the teacher to suggest that modern expository prose must have something to say about them. Thus use can be made of essays by acknowledged thinkers and writers and from the best of modern journalism, including articles from such magazines as *The Listener*. Such prose can serve a number of purposes: it can motivate the writing of a well-sustained essay based on some research; it can help the pupil to formulate his own views on a topic and to come to terms with the views of an adult world; it can stimulate discussion. It can also be used for language study, in which the structure, the vocabulary, the tone, the authors' attitudes to their subjects, the appropriateness of the registers used — can all be examined in class. Excerpts from articles can also be used occasionally as comprehension texts.

The advantage of integrating a programme of English studies on these lines is two-fold: it exploits a commitment and motivation already present in the pupils and it also gives a significant context to activities which might oherwise become meaningless exercises.

The programmes which follow are the work of many different teachers who set out to discover in the classroom how successfully the thematic approach might be used in the later stages of the secondary school. The original intention was to produce a simple collection of ready-made 'themes,' all neatly conforming to the same pattern, a pattern capable of infinite extension on a kind of loose-leaf basis—one page, one theme. In practice, however, this proved to be if not impossible then at least very difficult. Problems of book supply, interruptions to the time-table, variations in the type of class involved, shortage of preparation time, etc., inevitably arose, and major modifications had to be made in most cases.

There was general agreement, however, that, for all the difficulties, the thematic approach engendered lively interest and resulted in improved work. In the light of their experience, all concerned intend modifying their schemes and presenting them again to their future classes. Ultimately, it was felt, each teacher could work out for himself a model which would suit his own methods and talents, and from this develop a repertoire of viable and profitable theme-studies.

The eight programmes span the later secondary stages (Class III to Class V potential SCE candidates) but originate from different types of school. Each account begins by identifying the level and type of class for which the programme was designed. All are the work of experienced English teachers in actual classroom conditions. The comments made are

edited to some extent to suit the requirements of this publication, but are substantially the original comments made by the teachers themselves.

The programmes are not exemplars. They are, rather, records of experiment, whose principal value to other teachers must surely lie in the opportunity of comparison they offer and in the frank discussion of pitfalls and problems encountered and identified. In this connection there is recurring comment, for instance, on the difficulty of tailoring writing assignments not only to the theme but also to the ability, experience and needs of pupils. Changes of plan are discussed. Dangers are recognised—the danger inherent in treating too superficially too many texts: the danger, fairly obvious, of overworking teachers and, less obvious, of overworking pupils. Some of the programmes try to embrace all English work—the stimuli, the moral dilemmas, the mechanics. Others restrict their aim to exploring the theme itself. In either case implications of the choice are reflected in the comments.

In the appendix are presented samples of thematic material put together by post-graduate students. Some of these programmes have been tried in schools during teaching practice. Some are entirely theoretical. They sometimes display inexperience and uncertainty—of the kind indeed that will beset many teachers concocting their first themes. The range of texts chosen is particularly revealing—and the extensive use of extracts. The linking editorial comment tries to reflect the students' own intentions and, in some cases, misgivings about the programmes they presented.

NOTE: Programmes 6, 7 and 8 derive directly from studies initiated by the Higher English Sub-Group of the Lanarkshire County English Committee.

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PROGRAMME 1
Class V (Section 1)

THEME — **THE GAP BETWEEN HUMAN ASPIRATIONS AND THE REALITY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR**

Duration — One Term—six periods per week.

Texts

Novel — *The Sandcastle*—Iris Murdoch.

Drama
Death of a Salesman—Arthur Miller.
Flowering Cherry—Robert Bolt.
I'm Talking about Jerusalem—Arnold Wesker.

Poetry
The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock;
A Game of Chess, from *The Waste Land*—T. S. Eliot.
The Shield of Achilles—W. H. Auden.
The Managers—W. H. Auden.
Ultimate Reality—D. H. Lawrence.
Vanity—Robert Graves.
Next Please—Philip Larkin.
Love Songs in Age—Philip Larkin.
The Man in the Bowler Hat—A. S. J. Tessimond.
Not Waving but Drowning—Stevie Smith.

Non-fiction
Extract from *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Chapter 6, vv. 25-34.
Extract from the papal encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*.
Extract from a speech delivered by Martin Luther King in Detroit in October, 1967.
Passage from SCE paper, Higher English, 1b. (1965.) Author—W. H. Auden.

METHOD

Novel — One period. Read at home.

Assignments in the early stages involved the pupils in finding passages which indicated human aspirations and passages which indicated the reality of Mor's and Rain's situation.

One period per week was devoted to hearing pupils' reports on the selected passages and their comments, and in discussing any points which arose.

Pupils were asked to commit to memory short passages from the book which they found interesting or useful.

The later stages were taken up with discussing *The Sandcastle* (as a novel) in terms of story, characters, setting, point-of-view, etc. Emblematic

nature of the title was commented on and some ideas on recurring motifs in Iris Murdoch's novels—gardens, dogs, etc.—were suggested.

Poetry Two periods.

Each poem was analysed closely in class but prior to this pupils had to attempt their own analyses and some of these were read to the class and comment from the class was invited. Misconceptions were corrected and after classroom discussion the class again submitted their own amended analyses. The relationship of each poem to the general theme was discussed and differences of approach, emphasis, etc., were pointed out.

Drama Two periods.

The same sections, as a IVth Year group, read the Wesker Trilogy. From this they were asked to revise *I'm Talking about Jerusalem* and relate the theme of this play, the socialist dream in practice, to the general theme. *Death of a Salesman* and *Flowering Cherry* were read in class and each act of these plays was required to be summarised in some detail at home. Passages appropriate to the general theme were selected by me and commented upon. Again pupils were required to commit to memory their own personal selection of short, apt extracts.

Non-fiction One period.

These extracts were analysed closely from every point of view. Their relevance to the general topic was discussed. These extracts were also used as lead-in material for the teaching of grammar, register, punctuation, etc.

The Second Term's work will be an extension of this, maintaining basically the same texts where they are suitable and adding others to fit offshoots from the First Term topic, e.g. isolation—*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, A Man for All Seasons* and suitable additional poetry.

ASSIGNMENTS

(On the Texts)

1. The dreams of Willy Loman and Jim Cherry have strong similiarities, but they are different dreams from those of Prufrock. Show (a) how Loman's and Cherry's dreams are basically the same and (b) in what respect they differ from Prufrock's.

2. Choose one of the prescribed poems which in *your* opinion doesn't seem to fit very well the general scheme of things. Briefly justify your opinion. From your own reading choose a poem which you feel fits the topic better. Justify its inclusion in the list.

3. The critic Frederick R. Karl indicates among other qualities in *The Sandcastle* the following: incisive conception of some characters; a philosophical point of view; verbal skill; ability to convey humour and sadness. Chose any *two* of these qualities and discuss them, referring closely to the text of the novel.

4. Compare Isobel's speech demanding respect for Cherry and Linda's "attention must be paid" speech. Examine their attitudes to their husbands and indicate whether the attitudes are exactly the same.

5. Examine carefully the text of the extract from *Humanae Vitae* and using its criteria of married love discuss any two marriages dealt with in the texts studied.
6. Is the passage from Matthew a recipe for disaster or has it real meaning for people today?
7. Show how Martin Luther King's speech appeals to the emotions. Examine all the devices used.

General

Personal Essays

1. Marriage and its problems.
2. Are we entitled to our dreams?
3. Who needs parents? Defend the modern teenager.
4. Write an attack on or a defence of the ad-man. You may choose to write a poem or a piece of prose.

Classroom Debates—This House is of the opinion

1. That modern living is inimical to happiness.
2. That parents and adolescents are growing further and further apart.
3. That personal greed will always prevent the effective working of christianity.
4. That socialism, in the knowledge we have of human nature, is just another dream.
5. That personal success is the only criterion of life.

COMMENT

The choice of texts inspired good work. The group had a preference for modern literature and this was satisfied at the expense of including some lightweight material. The non-fiction works, with the exception of Martin Luther King's speech, proved a bit dull but since the aim is not solely to entertain them I had no hesitation in including these texts. The most enjoyable part of the work was provided by the full debates staged in class once a fortnight.

PROGRAMME 2

Class V

(A good quality section of boys, all of whom were probable Higher passes at the first attempt, though some on the borderline.)

THEME — **THE CLASS SYSTEM**

Duration — Ten weeks.

Texts

Look Back in Anger—John Osborne.
The Caucasian Chalk Circle—Bertolt Brecht.
Coriolanus—Shakespeare.
Lucky Jim—Kingsley Amis.
The Grapes of Wrath—John Steinbeck.
The Road to Wigan Pier—George Orwell.
The Twa Dogs—Burns.
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard—Gray.
My Last Duchess—Browning.
Good Friday—Edwin Morgan.
The Coming of the Wee Malkies—Stephen Mulrine.
Various extracts from anthologies—*Reflections, Impact, Things Being Various.*

Additional Recommended Reading

The Go-Between—L. P. Hartley.
Pride and Prejudice—Jane Austen.
This Sporting Life—David Storey.
Down and Out in Paris and London—George Orwell.
The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock;
A Game of Chess, from *The Waste Land*—T. S. Eliot.
Death in Leamington; The Planster's Vision—John Betjeman.
A Peasant; The Welsh Hill Country—R. S. Thomas.
Death the Leveller—Shirley.
A Man's a Man for a' That—Burns.
King Billy; In the Snack Bar—Edwin Morgan.

NOTE

All texts are relevant to the theme, but this is not to say that there is no other theme present in each text. Other aspects must be looked at, at least in the main texts. These texts require to be studied at this stage for their intrinsic rather than for their thematic value. The intention was that one of the texts chosen would not only be relevant to this theme but also form a starting-point for the next.

	PERIODS 1	2	3 and 4	5	6
WEEK 1	Class discussion on theme. Assign personal essays.	Texts introduced. Reading of novels assigned.	LOOK BACK IN ANGER. Act I.	Act II.	Act II (continued).
2	Act III.	Act III (continued).	Lecture on LOOK BACK IN ANGER and its place in the theatre. Written assignments.	THE TWA DOGS read and discussed. Other poems assigned for oral reports.	Comprehension—THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER. Chapters 1-3. Reading assigned. Chapters 4-7.
3	Group discussion of given topics related to themes of texts read. Consultations on personal essays.		Writing clinic: individual reports on group discussions.	Discussion on novels read so far. Re-allocation of novels. Personal reading suggestions.	Essays on LOOK BACK IN ANGER returned, with discussion.
4	Poems: oral reports.	Poem read and discussed—ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.	Comprehension test: THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER, Chapters 4-7. Further reading assigned.	Poems read and discussed—MY LAST DUCHESS.	Group discussion on themes of poems read so far. Consultations on written work.
5	Interim discussion on LUCKY JIM.	Writing assignments on LUCKY JIM.	Writing clinic: accounts of poems read.	Final lecture and discussion on LUCKY JIM.	THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE introduced. Reading assigned.

WEEK	PERIODS 1	2	3 and 4	5	6
6	THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE. Scenes 1 and 2.	Scenes 3 and 4.	Scenes 5 and 6	Group discussion—themes of THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE. Oral reports assigned.	Oral reports delivered and discussed.
7	Comprehension: THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER, Part 2.	Writing clinic: themes from THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER. THE GRAPES OF WRATH assignments.	Group discussion on novels. Consultations on written work.	Themes assigned for personal essays. Discussion on themes.	Writing clinic: draft outline of personal essay. Reading of poems assigned.
8	Group discussion: THE GRAPES OF WRATH.	Poem read and discussed—GOOD FRIDAY.	Final lecture and discussion on THE GRAPES OF WRATH.	CORIOLANUS introduced and reading assigned.	CORIOLANUS Act 1.
9	Act II.	Act III.	Acts IV and V.	Group discussion on CORIOLANUS and themes. Consultations on personal essays.	Writing clinic: CORIOLANUS. Consultations on personal essays.
10	CORIOLANUS essays discussed in relation to other themes.	Poem read and discussed—THE COMING OF THE WEE MALKIES.	Class test on literature,	Personal essays returned and discussed.	Class discussion of next term's theme. Reading assigned.

COMMENTS

In general I would regard the whole venture as a success. I failed to do much of what I set out to do but what was done was very well received, and much good work resulted.

Major modifications of the outlined scheme inevitably took place:

(a) The time-table was altered beyond recognition, since I found that the scheme had not allowed sufficient time for what was required. As a result the total amount read or discussed in class was much less than anticipated—for example, only two plays instead of three. One important factor here was something that always happens in schools—a series of disruptions of the school time-table as a result of external events such as a teachers' strike, several unscheduled early closings, periods lost to the SCE administrative arrangements, etc.

(b) Even the choice of texts had to be altered for the foreseeable reason that what was wanted was not always available when I wanted it. Nevertheless, since my book stock is good, I was able to supply acceptable substitutes—for example, *Death of a Salesman* replaced *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* very successfully, despite the very different qualities of these two plays.

(c) The programme of writing activities was very different from that anticipated. While every effort was made to keep within the theme, it must be accepted that at the 5th year stage pupils must always have an eye to the SCE examinations. This limitation was most apparent in the field of creative writing.

(d) On many occasions I found myself deserting the planned theme to follow what seemed like a fruitful lead in a totally different direction. I make no apologies for this—to me this is one of the fundamentals of successful teaching, the principle of the happy accident.

Positive advantages certainly accrued:

(a) For some years now I have found that—provided the texts are well chosen—there is no difficulty in arousing enthusiasm for English. But during these weeks I felt that the enthusiasm was greater than ever, even with a class which I have had now for two years.

(b) The most gratifying aspect was the amount of reading done. Apart from the texts discussed in class, there was a steady demand for all the recommended texts, a demand which eventually I found difficult to satisfy. (Some members of the class read ten or more novels in ten weeks, with every sign of enjoyment and profit.

(c) The idea of the formal lecture was very well received. Attention was close, later discussion was fruitful, and written work improved considerably. The only complaint was that more lectures should have been given.

(d) While there may have been a sense of anti-climax in that no clear conclusion was reached, there was no doubt that the unifying nature of the thematic approach (and the abandonment of the fragmented time-table) ensured that the whole undertaking seemed to the pupils to be relevant to the problems of the society of which they are members.

In conclusion, I have no doubt that this was a successful experiment. Admittedly it might be said that what eventually happened in class was so different from what was planned that the original plan is entirely worthless. I would not agree with this view. I enjoyed departing from the plan, but I also enjoyed having a plan to depart from and I have no doubt that my pupils enjoyed it and profited from it too.

PROGRAMME 3
Class V

(Boys of lowish academic ability, half probably requiring two years to pass Higher English. Antagonistic towards literature, especially poetry.)

THEME — **WAR—AND ITS AFTERMATH**

Duration

Eight weeks approximately. Not pre-determined, but "played by ear." Not all periods spent on thematic work.

Text

Fiction

A Farewell to Arms—Ernest Hemingway.
The Moon is Down—John Steinbeck.
Various other texts suggested for home reading.

Non-fiction

Agincourt—Philip Lindsay (in *Modern Prose*—Nelson).
Game, Set and Match—Col. Pinto (in *Mirror of the Times*, Book V—pub. Ginn, ed. James Scotland).
Clouded August Thorn—H. E. Bates (in *Narrative Essays*—Harrap).
A range of literary reading suggested, including Robert Graves, Edmund Blunden, A. de Saint-Exupery, Keith Douglas.

Short Story

Journey into Smoke—Clive Sansom (English Short Stories since 1930, ed. John Morris).

Poetry

The usual Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, and earlier poems from *The Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics.*
Soldiers Bathing—F. T. Prince.
Vergissmeinicht—Keith Douglas.
To a Conscript of 1940—Herbert Read.
A Woman Unconscious—Ted Hughes.
Daddy—Sylvia Plath.
Weddings in Wartime—Yevgeny Yevtushenko.
'Naming of Parts' from *Lessons of the War*—Henry Reed.

Drama

The Long and the Short and the Tall—Willis Hall.
Journey's End—R. C. Sheriff.
Henry IV (*Pts. 1 & 2*) and *Henry V*—Shakespeare (selected scenes on disc).

Disc and Tape

Traditional folk songs on war.
Modern "pop" protest, e.g. *The Universal Soldier*—Donovan.
World War III Blues—Bob Dylan, etc.
War Requiem (selections)—Benjamin Britten.

COMMENTS

Before we read anything, I asked the class to write a short account of what their own reaction would be if they were conscripted tomorrow—most of them are near conscription age. We discussed their answers at some length.

In literature work I concentrated on poetry, partly because I was determined to make them see that poetry can be virile and forceful and partly because it best suited the subject I most wanted to study, namely, how attitudes to war have changed. With this in mind we read the war poems in chronological order, starting with Collins, Scott, Macaulay, etc., from *The Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*. We studied the developing attitude of cynicism towards war, even between the poetry of the two world wars, and progressing up to poems of the sixties. We read about forty poems from a wide variety of sources. After having read this poetry, each pupil did a major written assignment which consisted of:

(a) a biographical sketch of the war poet he most enjoyed (using the library for reference books).
(b) an account of three of his poems.
(c) a statement of this poet's attitude to war.
(d) an account of another two poems by another writer.
(e) an essay on how attitudes to war have changed.

In prose work, we started with non-fiction, reading a series of extracts from newspaper articles and books about the last war. We also listened to records of Churchill's most famous speeches, and analysed (a) the psychological approach he used, and (b) how he achieved his effects by his use of language and rhetorical devices.

Next, we moved on to fiction reading. *The Moon is Down* and *A Farewell to Arms* were read by all.

In drama we read *Journey's End* and discussed where it fitted in with the development of war poetry, comparing the attitude to war of various characters in the play with that expressed in various war poems.

To finish the course with some light relief, we read some more of Henry Reed's *Lessons of the War* which the class found highly amusing.

ADDITIONAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

(a) Imaginative—based on fiction read.
(b) Factual—Reports, newspaper accounts, use of statistics.
(c) Interpretation— (i) Using a passage from *Clouded August Thorn.*
(ii) Using a George Steiner passage on Jews from *Language and Silence.*
(d) Literature—Appropriate examination questions on texts.

PROGRAMME 4
Class IV

(All girls, some of whom will probably gain Higher English in Form V and a smaller number who will need two years' preparation for Higher, but most of whom will probably gain an "O" Grade pass this year.)

THEME	**LOYALTY**
Duration	Ten weeks approximately.
Texts	
Drama	*Macbeth*—Shakespeare. *The Merchant of Venice*—Shakespeare.
Novels	*Jane Eyre*—Charlotte Bronte. *The Mill on the Floss*—George Eliot. *The Heart of Midlothian*—Sir Walter Scott. *A Town Like Alice*—Nevil Shute. *Pride and Prejudice*—Jane Austen.
Short Stories	*Wanted—A Miracle*—A. M. Tucker. *Henry*—Phyllis Bottome. *Mrs Adis*—Sheila Kaye-Smith. *The Sexton's Here*—Mrs Gaskell. *Tennessee's Partner*—Bret Harte.
Poetry	*Michael*—Wordsworth. *The Highwayman*—Alfred Noyes. *Bannerman of the Dandenong*—Alice Werner in *A Treasury of Verse*—Harrap. *Sohrab and Rustum*—Matthew Arnold.
Ballads and Sonnets including	*On His Blindness*—Milton. *Ozymandias*—Shelley.
Additional Reading	*Lord of the Flies*—William Golding. *Animal Farm*—George Orwell. *Cider with Rosie*—Laurie Lee. *The Red Badge of Courage*—Stephen Crane.
Biographies of	Florence Nightingale; Madame Curie; Odette; Helen Keller; Elizabeth Fry. *Duet for Three Hands*—Cyril Smith.

COMMENTS

The theme was introduced to the class by a discussion from which followed a piece of writing on loyalty—a choice of approaches was given; the theme could be dealt with in an abstract way or illustrated by means of an original short story or by an account of some known instance of loyalty in personal life.

Blocks of time were given to the reading of *Macbeth*, while some of the obvious instances of loyalty in the narrative poems were considered.

Approaches to the theme in *Macbeth* were developed in roughly the following pattern:

Initial Phase

Allegiance to the King as an initial theme: the defection of Cawdor.

Macbeth's fealty and his scruples (the idea of the divine right of kings was introduced), the reactions of Malcolm and Donalbain, Banquo and Macduff after the murder of Duncan.

Central Phase

The loyalty of husband/wife (Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; Macduff and Lady Macduff—the question of conflict of loyalties), the loyalty of father/son (Malcolm and Donalbain; Fleance and Banquo—the price of loyalty), loyalty to one's nation as distinct from loyalty to one's King.

Writing: Lady Macduff's position (was her husband right?).
Letter from Macduff on arrival in England.

Final Phase

The basis of loyalty and the treachery of the thanes.
Mistaken loyalty to an idea (the witches).
A renewed loyalty—the time is free.

The Merchant of Venice was examined in rather less detail but with certain parallel notions of loyalty in mind. These emerged as studies of the following aspects which covered the major situations:

(a) The loyalty of friend for friend.
Antonia—the loan—the price—Bassanio's recognition of responsibility.

(b) The loyalty of husband and wife.
Portia's support of Bassanio "all the way."
Nerissa's support of Gratiano (the comic test of Gratiano's loyalty).

(c) Shylock—a study of loyalty.
(i) to his faith and tribe.
(ii) to his family and especially to his dead wife. (This produced a study of the symbolism of rings in the play—Portia's, Leah's, Nerissa's).

(d) Father/daughter loyalty.
(i) Portia's to her dead father.
(ii) Jessica and the conflict.

(e) Comic loyalty—Lancelot Gobbo.

Michael was taken as a father/son situation; *Sohrab and Rustum* as another father/son situation providing a contrastive background.

Writing Assignments

A letter from Bassanio to Portio, describing Antonio's plight and his own fears.

The reply from Portia.

A letter to Bellario.

A contemporary short story based on the theme of *Michael*—a teenager who leaves home.

The different loyalties of Jack, Ralph and Simon in *Lord of the Flies.*

The short stories were read both as examples of the loyalty theme and for their inherent interest.

NOTES ON THE COURSE

Close reading was not necessarily related to the theme, though certain portions of text were chosen with a view to considering the language of loyalty. An attempt was also made (not entirely successfully) to relate material in the Scripture lessons to the theme. A number of modern poems were duplicated for particular use in this theme study.

The approach seemed to encourage a much more mature evaluation of the texts, it led to the examination of many situations and aroused more interest because the different texts were related and, as each new one was introduced, there already existed a basis for discussion.

Many pupils said that they found it easier to cope with their private reading because their attention was guided towards some notion behind events.

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PROGRAMME 5
Class IV

(A class of lower academic ability who will have great difficulty in attaining "O" Grade.)

THEME	**CHILDHOOD**
Duration	Six weeks approximately.
Texts	
Core Text	*There is a Happy Land*—Keith Waterhouse.
Short Stories	*The Idealist*—Frank O'Connor. *My Oedipus Complex*—Frank O'Connor. *On Saturday Afternoon*—Alan Sillitoe.
Poems	*Fern Hill*—Dylan Thomas. *Timothy Winters*—Charles Causley. *The Toys*—Coventry Patmore. *Children's Party*—Ogden Nash. *My Parents Kept Me From Children Who Were Rough*—Stephen Spender.
Additional Texts	*Cider with Rosie*—Laurie Lee. *Lord of the Flies*—William Golding. *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*—Dylan Thomas. *Huckleberry Finn*—Mark Twain. *Tom Sawyer*—Mark Twain. *The Otterbury Incident*—C. Day Lewis. *The Only Child*—James Kirkup. *Grandad with Snails*—Michael Baldwin. *The Catcher in the Rye*—J. D. Salinger (although this last book is concerned with adolescence rather than childhood, there are striking similarities between it and *There is a Happy Land:* e.g. the titles both come from snatches of song which the hero hears and thinks significant).

COMMENTS

The approach to the core text was by way of a key passage describing the child's encounter with a crippled boy singing a version of "There is a Happy Land." DISCUSSION: What views of childhood emerge? What is the significance of the title of the book? Why does the narrator wish he had irons on his leg? What is the significance of his dream?

From this discussion there emerged an awareness of the boy's loneliness and his need for affection. Other aspects of the basic theme of childhood which emerged from discussion of the novel as a whole were:

(a) The disillusionment and loss of innocence which comes as childhood progresses.

(b) The child's love of daydreaming—especially if lonely and unsure of himself.

(c) The primitiveness of children as a society—bully or be bullied.

(d) The limitations of a child's awareness of and comprehension of his world.

The short stories and the poems, like the core text, were chosen not only for their relevance to the theme but also for the prospect they offered of giving interest and enjoyment to a class of limited ability.

All written work during the period of this study was based on the theme —personal essays, creative writing, interpretation, etc. While it would not be true to say that excellent work was produced, it is nevertheless true that, for a class of such a type, the work produced was better than had previously been achieved by more traditional methods. At the very least, there was no doubt as to the increased interest that the thematic approach engendered.

PROGRAMME 6
Class IV

(Two classes, 4E1 and 4E7, the top and bottom Higher sections.)

THEME	WORK
Duration	Six weeks.
Novel	*Billy Liar*—Keith Waterhouse.
Short Story	*The Verger*—Somerset Maugham. Selected prose extracts from various anthologies.
Drama	*The Government Inspector*—Nikolai Gogol. (4E1 only.)
Poems	*The Twa Dogs*—Burns. *Last Lesson of the Afternoon*—D. H. Lawrence. *Train to Work*—Bernard Spencer. *The Bus Conductor*—Roger McGough. *Cynddylan on a Tractor*—R. S. Thomas. *Man with Scythe*—A. W. Russell. *Will Consider Situation*—Ogden Nash. *Wages*—D. H. Lawrence.

COMMENTS

There was no marked enthusiasm for the theme shown by either class. The value of the particular theme, 'Work,' is debatable for academic pupils. The lack of interest was more noticeable in 4E1, who felt that the subject was too remote to allow them to become personally involved. This feeling of detachment may have been aggravated by the lack of balance and variety in the texts, which concentrated mainly on the manual or factory worker.

It was felt that too many texts (poems and prose extracts) were used, and this led to a rather superficial examination of texts. On the other hand 4E1 objected to the close study of poems. From neither class was there any great demand for discussion, and when it took place it was desultory and not sustained.

Both sections, and especially 4E7, wrote more than they would have done by a more traditional approach. Perhaps they were influenced by their study of the theme to write with a clearer focus and in a more lively manner on the more creative assignments, such as short story, poem and playlet. The assignments were not optional but were given out to all as they emerged from the work being read and discussed at the time. They were asked to write during the Easter holidays a review of a novel. A few of 4E1 and about half of 4E7 failed to complete this assignment.

Billy Liar, one of our core texts in the study of the theme, proved to be more interesting in its non-thematic aspects. Initially it was possible and valuable to find the 'work' theme akin to the theme of the novel, but as we progressed further into the novel, it became submerged in the more powerful theme of personal and family relationships. In the field of the short story, *The Verger* was thought to be a very inadequate representative of this genre.

CONCLUSION

Three important points emerged. First, thorough preparation of the theme is essential and this should be based on materials readily available. The texts used should be strictly relevant and limited in number; a mass of material only tenuously connected leads to unsatisfactory skimming and a blurring of focus. Knowing well in advance the scope offered for the study of a particular theme, the teacher will be able to plan a coherent programme and thus avoid giving the class the impression of makeshift day-to-day arrangements. Purpose and connection should be prominent at all stages.

Secondly, consideration ought to be given to devising simple non-literary activities to supplement the texts and written assignments. Discussion should be given a prominent place at any time. Films, tapes, records, external visits, invited guests should add dimension to the theme. This would appear to be especially important in the case of less academic pupils.

Finally, a concentrated, high-activity treatment is more desirable than a protracted leisurely treatment which too often ends in anti-climax and boredom, instead of in the culmination that surely should attend a well-devised programme of study.

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PROGRAMME 7
Class III

(A class of lower academic ability who will have great difficulty in attaining "O" Grade.)

THEME — **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Duration — Four weeks (at the end of the session, when interest was at a low ebb).

Texts

Prose

The Silver Sword—Ian Serraillier
The Pearl—John Steinbeck.
Cider with Rosie—Laurie Lee.
My Early Life—Winston Churchill.
Various passages from *Recent Short Stories*—ed. E. L. Black.
Reflections, ed. Clements, Dixon and Stratta.
Prose of Today, ed. N. H. Wallis.
Fifteen Prose Pieces, ed. W. A. Thornton and A. R. Tomkins.

Poetry

Timothy Winters—Charles Causley.
The Evacuee—R. S. Thomas.
Turf Carrier on Aranmore—John Hewitt.
My Grandmother—Elizabeth Jennings.
The Cotter's Saturday Night—Burns.
Michael—Wordsworth.
We are Seven—Wordsworth.

METHOD

The general approach was that laid down in the scheme suggested by the Glasgow English Development Centre. In this scheme, writing assignments of various kinds are given out—writing from experience, creative writing, social writing (letters, telegrams, newspaper notices, etc.), and reportage. The topics for these assignments were displayed to the class at the outset, to give a clear-cut objective.

In preliminary discussion it was made clear to the pupils that the work book was a very personal affair, their own property, and that addenda in the way of newspaper/magazine cuttings, passages of prose and verse, decoration, etc., would be welcomed. The Art Department agreed to co-operate in the provision of material and time. The School Library prepared a special selection of non-fictional material, bearing on the theme. Pupils were directed to this in their weekly library period. Each pupil was issued with two notebooks—one for rough copy, checked by the teacher, the other to receive the final version. It was stressed throughout that the content was entirely the pupil's affair, that the corrector would confine himself strictly to the mechanics of style—punctuation, spelling, idiom, etc. Any widespread weakness revealed, e.g. in punctuation, letter-writing formalities, telegram and newspaper conventions, etc., were made the subjects of set lessons at intervals. Pupils were encouraged to settle their difficulties by consulting

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reference material, e.g. a dictionary; a well-indexed grammar book; a wall display of telegram, business letter, newspaper cuttings, etc.; or by asking the teacher for guidance.

The approach to the reading material was the 'block' one, i.e. the class first concentrated (for a week) in school and at home on completing the novel *The Silver Sword*, the English periods being taken up by the teacher's reading of selected passages and attempting to stimulate discussion on the question of human relationships thrown up in the course of the book. Next came a similar period of concentration for 7-8 days on the short stories assigned. The verse passages were next treated, and finally miscellaneous material such as magazine and newspaper cuttings were provided by teacher and pupils.

CONCLUSIONS

Bearing in mind the low academic calibre of the class, the shortness of the time available, and the low morale generally experienced at this period of the year, the results were undoubtedly most encouraging. As they became accustomed to the exercise, a very high proportion of pupils produced what was obviously frank and sincere writing. In the last few days of the session, most of the pupils who had fallen behind were working with impressive zeal to complete their assignments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The system should certainly be tried out in extended form as an integral part of the session's syllabus. Slower pupils would undoubtedly have benefited from a longer period in which to adjust to the spirit of the exercise. The shortage of time likewise narrowed the range of texts. Wider coverage would have increased the chances of catching their interest.

The most disappointing part of the experiment was the attempt to encourage free discussion. Pupils were embarrassed, inarticulate, and suspicious, and generally wrote far better than they talked. With pupils of this type, the aspect of oracy clearly calls for more attention than it has received in their earlier formal work and in this experiment. In this matter of loosening their tongues, more time and practice will of course help, but it would certainly be worth trying to include some 'lecturettes' (three-minute talks by pupils followed by class discussion) on the theme material.

PROGRAMME 8
Class III

THEME	**SCHOOL LIFE**
Duration	Six weeks.
Texts	
Prose	*David Copperfield*—Dickens.
Short Story	*One Friday Morning*—Langston Hughes. *The Doll's House*—Katharine Mansfield. *The Idealist*—Frank O'Connor. *Billy Bunter*—Frank Richards. *The Battle*—D. H. Lawrence. *Araby*—James Joyce. (All from *Recent Short Stories* or *Fifteen Prose Pieces*.)
Extracts	*Old Gang*—A. S. Tring. *Jim Starling and the Colonel*—E. W. Hildick. *Goodbye Mr Chips*—James Hilton.
Poetry	*Last Period of the Day*—D. H. Lawrence. *Snowy Day in School*—D. H. Lawrence. *The Best of School*—D. H. Lawrence. 'The Day-School Master' from *The Borough* (Letter XXIV)—George Crabbe). *The Village Schoolmaster*—Oliver Goldsmith. *The Ageing Schoolmaster*—Vernon Scannell. *The Enormous Comics*—Martin Bell.

COMMENT

The method here, and the comments, are the same as in Programme 7. As before, writing assignments were given under four headings: from experience (e.g. The Worst Lesson I Remember); creative (e.g. short story about a pupil whose behaviour is misunderstood by a teacher); social (e.g. letter to a pen-friend describing one's school life); reportage (e.g. survey on the curriculum as it is and as it should be).

APPENDIX

The following samples are taken from thematic programmes produced by graduate students during their year of training in two Scottish Colleges of Education. It was inevitable that students preparing a theme for teaching practice should rely heavily on excerpts—vide *the two programmes in Section B. The first programme—Section A—having no such immediate aim, could make greater use of complete texts.*

PROGRAMME A

Class IV—but applicable to Class III, with minor modifications

THEME **THEM AND US**

Duration Six weeks—six periods per week.

This was a group effort by six students. A shortened version of the programme is reprinted, omitting a twenty-seven page appendix of material, with samples only *from the detailed working plan.*

General Aims

1. To explore various situations where conflict occurs between authorities (e.g. within the school situation), or where small-group values conflict with those demanded by a central authority (e.g. newspaper reports on student protest and demonstrations).
2. To break down the concept of authority, with examples of different authorities in state, school, family.
3. To look at authority presented through mass media and literature, and see if these concepts tally with or disagree with their own concepts. Where do we get ideas about authority from . . . family, school, other agencies?
4. To assist the children in expressing their own ideas on authority.
5. To provide reading material that will contribute to the theme under survey, broader experience of a variety of authors, and make available a wide selection of full works and extracts from every writing genre.

Week 1: General Introduction

Week 3:

Most of this week is spent reading *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, in class, requiring some time to be spent during the reading to clarify the situation for the class.

Other alternatives to *The Crucible* might be:

The Royal Hunt of the Sun by Peter Schaeffer;
St Joan by Bernard Shaw;
The Lark by Jean Anouilh.

Aim

This would be to look at the individual in conflict with authority (here we have authority as represented in both Church and State).

We use *The Crucible* to explore a situation in which:

(a) The authority is in the wrong.

(b) The authority makes demands on the individual conscience which are incompatible with its own principles.

(c) To raise the question whether the extent of the State's authority should be determined by its particular needs, i.e. why do some societies feel that they must have complete control over all its individuals? (cf. Russia, Britain; or one of the religious societies such as the Jesuit order.)

Week 4: Group Work

The make-up of the groups is not important as the range of work is shared. The aim during this week is to give opportunity for individual or co-operative exploration of particular "authority" situations; to look at a variety of areas where conflict situations are recorded and expressed; to give opportunity for group discussions over choice of items; and to encourage, through presentation and study of a range of material, individual writing.

We would aim to produce at the end of the week:

1. Class sharing—by making a tape-recording or by reading aloud—of the creative writing produced by the groups. We suggest two contributions from each group, chosen either by that group or by another group.
2. Each group to produce a folder to contain the following range of work:
   (a) Story of and comments on one historical character.
   (b) A selection of newspaper items showing conflict situations, between groups or individuals and society, with comments and reasons for the choices.
   (c) Song, ballad and poem chosen by group, again with reasons for choice.
   (d) Songs, poems, stories or dialogue, etc., written by the children themselves. (Everybody would produce something.)

The bulk of the work would be done by the groups—working in the library or on material brought from home.

We would give each group one "character," for example:
Thomas More (see Chambers' *Sir Thomas More; A Man for All Seasons*).
Luther (see Osborne's *Luther* and historical sources).
Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer.
Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.
Bernard Shaw, *St Joan*, and Anouilh, *The Lark*.
Bertrand Russell.

We would also provide some poems, ballads, records (e.g. Dylan), speeches (e.g. Tom Paine, et al.), and pictures, to give a basis for work and indication of the kind of material that would be found. Reading list attached gives some possible sources of material for this section of the project. The folders produced by each group should be available to other groups to work at, even if there is no time to "share" all the work done.

During the final two weeks three linked topics were offered—Family/School/State—in which the first two were thought of as sub-topics of the third. We reprint the second of these, followed by the production aims of the final topics.

THE SCHOOL

Aim

To study the changes in the structure of school life—19th to 20th centuries. The class would look at the extracts from novels, or biographies dealing with school situations and ranging from the authoritarian to the democratic. As well as the extracts from given works, the class could also

read *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, which illustrates the conflict between the teacher and the establishment.

Production Aim

1. Discussion. Allowing the class to air their views on a particular subject in which they feel closely involved.
   How has the school teacher been predominantly presented in literature and the mass media?
   Are those accurate presentations in modern situations?
   The conflict between the teacher and the establishment he represents.
   Problem of discipline and corporal punishment.
   The range of schools from authoritarian to extremely liberal—what are the aims of these? How do they affect the pupils?
   What sort of adults are they trying to produce?
2. Written work. Dialogue situations within school.
   The ideal school.
   What changes would you like to see made through a school council?
   or: How a school council could be organised.
   Extracts on school (Neill, Goldsmith, Blishen, Lee, Dickens, Churchill, Yeats, Scannell, Trevorrow, Joyce) were provided in appendix.

THE STATE

Production Aim: Discussion

e.g., Is the State morally right to make demands on the lives of its citizens?

Why and when is rebellion justifiable? To what extent is a man responsible for his own freedom in making his life?

Is the individual the final authority for his own actions?

The discussion would follow on from points raised in the works cited.

Production Aim: Written

1. Speeches (perhaps in class) as though written by some of the characters from the fiction, employing the emotions shared by some of the central characters in the plays.
2. Poems could be suggested also, conveying the emotions experienced by individual characters from the extracts. The deaths of, e.g., Spartacus or the Sun God could be visualised in this way.

Extracts

The Gladiators—Arthur Koestler.
Freedom—speeches on freedom by Lincoln and Churchill.

READING LIST

This list contains (a) some alternative texts which we considered possible at various stages of the project, and (b) some background/further reading possibilities.

The Schools Council/N.A.T.E. Report, *Children as Readers* (September, 1968) gives a list compiled for study on the theme of authority.

1. Possible alternative films:
   Billy Budd.
   Battleship Potemkin.

2. Possible alternative plays for core work on the State:
The Royal Hunt of the Sun—Peter Schaeffer.
A Man for All Seasons—Robert Bolt.
Luther—John Osborne.

3. Possible alternative novels, again for work on the State:
Animal Farm—George Orwell.
1984—George Orwell.
Brave New World—Aldous Huxley.
The Iron Heel—Jack London.

4. Additional material for group work on the State:
Androcles and the Lion—George Bernard Shaw.
Sir Thomas More—R. W. Chambers.
Shooting an Elephant—George Orwell.
Dooley is a Traitor—J. Michie.
Soul on Ice—Eldridge Cleaver.

5. Additional material for work on the Family:
Autobiography (early chapters)—J. S. Mill.
Father and Son—Edmund Gosse.
A Child of the Jago—Arthur Morrison.
Pride and Prejudice (early parts)—Jane Austen.
Mansfield Park (excerpts)—Jane Austen.
The Mayor of Casterbridge—Hardy.
Silas Marner—George Eliot.
The Mill on the Floss (early chapters)—George Eliot.

Additional material for work on the School:
The School that I'd Like—Edward Blishen.
To Sir with Love—E. R. Braithwaite.
The Sandcastle—Iris Murdoch.
Tom Brown's Schooldays—Thomas Hughes.
The Rainbow—D. H. Lawrence.
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie—Muriel Spark.

An interesting feature of this theme plan is the deliberate emphasis on flexibility—particularly of choice of text.

PROGRAMME B

A different approach to theme work is evident in the next two outlines where the theme is developed and controlled by a carefully organised sequence of texts. The printed text reflects, in each case, a twenty-one lesson sequence out of a project designed to last at least six weeks. Each programme is the work of one student.

Class IV

THEME **WAR AND ATTITUDES TO WAR**

Duration Three weeks—a twenty-one lesson sequence.

Text Sequence

Period 2 advertisement for Armed Forces.

Period 3 *The Charge of the Light Brigade*—Tennyson, plus contemporary prose extract.

Period 4 prose extract from *The First World War*—R. R. Sellman.
Third Ypres—Edmund Blunden.

Period 6 *Anthem for Doomed Youth*—Wilfred Owen.
Period 7 prose extract from *In Flanders Field*.
Period 8 *The Battle of Waterloo*—McGonagall.
Period 9 *The Dead*—Rupert Brooke.
Graves on the Somme—Joyce Ligertwood.
Period 10 *The Patriot Game*—Dominic Behan.
With God on Our Side—Bob Dylan.
Period 11 extracts from *For Whom the Bell Tolls*—Ernest Hemingway.
Period 12 extracts from various war speeches—Winston Churchill.
Period 13 'Judging Distances' from *Lessons of the War*—Henry Reed.
Period 14 short extract from *The Cruel Sea*—Nicholas Monsarrat.
Period 15 short extract from *Sailor Malan*—Oliver Walker.
Period 17 two short extracts from *Catch 22*—Joseph Heller.
Period 20 *Your Attention Please*—Peter Porter, plus contemporary newspaper article on similar theme.

Programme Samples

Period 3 *The Charge of the Light Brigade*—Tennyson.
Overall impressions . . . is it a good poem? What is it about? Is the charge all that it's about? How does it work? . . . language, sound. What's the poet's attitude to the charge, the soldiers, the 'blunderer'? What feature(s) of British military service emerges most clearly in the poem (note stanza two)? (Discipline . . . obedience even in response to mistaken orders leading to disastrous results.)
(Issue the texts of *Third Ypres* for next period: to be read carefully for next term.)

Period 4 *Third Ypres:* (History/Poem by Blunden/Photograph, not of this battle).
Brief discussion of photograph—what it may have looked like to a soldier. Comparison of two texts . . . their methods of expression . . . detached (is it?), objective approach of historian . . . emotional involvement of poet who was there. Why is the poem so much longer? Is accuracy of historical prose necessarily brief? Does the prose cut out irrelevancies included by the poet? Or does the poet include important details omitted by the historian? If so, what are these details? How do they work to make the poem more or less dependable as a report of the battle? *Is* the poem more or less than a report? What *is* a report . . . its function, etc.? Close analyses of the Sellman and Blunden texts (e.g. Blunden, ll, 45-49; what do they suggest and how do they enforce the poet's attitude? Sellman, ll, 26-7, 'Late in October . . . prolonged'; how does this illustrate the historian's feelings?).
Next period, essay (as long as pupil wishes) agreeing or disagreeing with the statement, 'Poets and Historians: Every Man to His Own Task.'

Period 9 *The Dead*—Rupert Brooke. *Craves on The Somme*—Joyce Ligertwood.
The aim here is to compare the two poems, and to contrast Brooke's belief that 'honour and Nobleness' have been brought back to humanity through the deaths of the soldiers, with Ligertwood's assertion that the dead are now forgotten and her suggestion that they died for nothing. The structure of the verse and the language will also be compared and contrasted, together with the facts of Brooke's involvement in the war and Ligertwood's view from a distance of some 50 years after the event. Is Brooke's experience any more valid than Ligertwood's as a result of its directness or immediacy?

Period 10 *The Patriot Game*—Dominic Behan.
With God on Our Side—Bob Dylan.
Again, compare and contrast. The apparent eagerness of O'Hanlon to fight for his country, his seeming conviction that his cause is just and that God (or at least right) is on his side, and his bitterness at dying without having gained (enough) vengeance on his country's betrayers. The answer from Dylan . . . that names, ages, countries, and causes cannot claim God as an ally in the murder of other human beings. Which is the most convincing argument? Are these 'protest' songs? If they are, does that diminish their value? Behan's ballad is concerned with the Irish problem; how does Dylan extend the theme to a world-wide view?
Prepare a debate for next period on 'Everybody's protesting nowadays: protest, in song or by whatever medium, is meaningless.'

Period 11 *For Whom the Bell Tolls*—Ernest Hemingway.
(This is a very much shortened version of the passage as it appears in the novel. I would prefer to have, if not the novel itself, at least the whole passage in which these 'executions' are described.)
The passage will be compared with other prose pieces discussed already; i.e. men against an unknown enemy, men against neighbours, brothers, people with whom they have lived for years . . . the greater degeneration of human values in civil war than in 'normal war.'
Write an account of this scene such as a correspondent would send to a newspaper from Spain to Britain.

A similar closely controlled lesson sequence was the basic plan for the second programme in this section. The significant difference lies in the introduction of a core novel in the second programme half-way through the three-week period.

PROGRAMME C
Class IV—top ability

THEME **VIOLENCE**

Duration Three weeks—a twenty-one lesson sequence.

Note: The period number indicates the stage at which texts were first *introduced, not the extent of use—a point to note particularly when considering references to the core novel.*

Text sequence

Period	1	Six page extract from *Free Fall*—William Golding.
Period	2	*Unholy Marriage*—David Holbrook. *Mid-Term Break*—Seamus Heaney.
Period	3	Six page extract from *Radcliffe*—David Storey.
Period	6	Folk/Pop songs—1. These Boots were made for Walkin'. 2. Bang! Bang!
Period	7	Four page extract from *The Courage of his Convictions* —Robert Allerton, as told to Tony Parker. This is an account by an 'old lag.'
Periods	8/9	*Black Power* (an essay)—Stokely Carmichael. The last two items lead directly to the core novel.
Periods	10/11	*Light in August*—William Faulkner—core novel.
Period	12	*The Question Is* (Poem)—William Wantling.
Period	13	'The Copper' (from *Work*, Vol. 1, ed. Ronald Fraser) —the writer is a C.I.D. officer.
Period	16	Forty-two page extract from *The Rainbow*—D. H. Lawrence.
Period	18	*The Code*—Robert Frost.
Period	19	Three Poems by Wilfred Owen: 1. 'What passing bells . . .' 2. *Futility.* 3. *Strange Meeting.*
Period	20	Four page extract 'Fiesta' from *The Sun Also Rises*— Ernest Hemingway.

The texts also provided the main stimuli for considerable and varied writing and debating activities.

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